

PRESS (MEDIA) RELEASE

SENT TO (NAMES OF NEWS/MEDIA OUTLETS AND MAJOR EMPLOYERS CONTEMPLATING LAYOFFS)

(Make appropriate changes as applicable to reflect the programs operated)

(Local school food authority) announced its policy for providing free and reduced-price meals for children served under the **(insert National School Lunch Program, USDA School Foods Program and/or School Breakfast Program)**. **[Name of School]** offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs **[\$]**; lunch costs **[\$]**. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. Reduced price is **[\$]** for breakfast and **[\$]** for lunch.

To apply for free or reduced-price meals, households may fill out the application and return it to the school unless your children qualify for free benefits (see below). Application forms are being distributed to all households with a letter informing households of the availability of free and reduced-price meals for their children and what is required to complete on the application. Applications also are available **(insert locations where the applications are available, i.e. at the principal's office in each school, on the school's website)**. The information households provide on the application will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and verification of data. Applications may be verified at any time during the school year by school or other program officials. An application for free or reduced price benefits cannot be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information as indicated on the application and instructions.

The household size and income criteria will be used to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price benefits. Children from households whose income is at or below the guidelines are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Your children may qualify for free meal benefits if the household receives benefits and/or if your child meets a categorical requirement:

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); or
- The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
- Homeless, migrant or runaway as defined by law; or
- Enrolled in an eligible Head Start, Even Start or pre-kindergarten class as defined in by law
- Foster children that are the legal responsibility of a welfare agency or court regardless of the income of the household with whom they reside

For any child not listed on the eligibility notice, the households should contact the school about any child also eligible under one of these programs or should submit an income application for other children.

If households/children receive benefits under Assistance Programs or other source programs are not notified by the school of their free meal benefits, the parent/guardian should contact their school.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price policy, **(title of determining officials)** will review applications and determine eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling of the official may wish to discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. Parents wishing to make a formal appeal for a hearing on the decision may make a request either orally or in writing to **(name, address, and phone of the hearing official)**.

If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the levels.

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